

Remarks/Arguments

The Examiner is thanked for the careful review of this Application. Claims 1-27 are pending after entry of the present Amendment. New claims 23-27 were added. This Amendment is being presented in the new format, as suggested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph:

The Office has rejected claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Office states that the phrase "scissor-like" renders the claim indefinite for including elements not actually disclosed.

Applicant respectfully traverses Office's assertion, as Applicants believe that the phrase "scissor-like" has been particularly defined by the Application in the disclosure. Applicant respectfully draws the Office's attention to lines 17-18 of page 8 wherein Applicant states:

Each leaf structure rotates about the turret 120 in a relatively independent manner or a "scissors" like manner. In particular, lead structure 117 rotates about the turret independently from leaf structure 118.

Nevertheless, to expedite the prosecution process, Applicant has amended claim 20 to specifically recite that the pair of leaf structures are configured to rotate about the turret in an independent manner. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection of claim 20 should be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102:

The Office has rejected claims 1-6, 9-14, and 17-21 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 5,738,574 to Tolles et al. (hereinafter "Tolles"). It is respectfully submitted that Tolles fails to identically disclose each and every element of the claimed invention, as defined in independent claims 1, 9, 17, and 18.

Tolles discloses an apparatus for polishing semiconductor wafers. The apparatus includes polishing pads mounted on respective platens at multiple polishing stations. Particularly, the apparatus includes three polishing stations and two intermediate washing stations that are located between the two adjacent polishing stations and a washing station that is defined between the last polishing station and the transfer station. The apparatus also

includes a rotatable mutli-head carousel having a shape of a cross that includes four wafer head systems. Each wafer is polished when the platens are applied on the respective polishing station.

It is submitted that Tolles fails to identically disclose each and every feature of the claimed invention. For instance, among other features, Tolles fails to disclose a leaf structure that is rotatably coupled to a turret, or a leaf structure that includes a pair of carrier devices. Rather, the carousal of Tolles (the alleged leaf structure) includes four wafer head systems. Furthermore, each of the wafer head systems is configured to hold a wafer each of which is configured to be applied on a separate polishing station. In contrast, in the claimed invention, as defined in claim 1, the pair of carrier devices are configured to hold a pair of workpieces. Furthermore, the pair of workpieces of the claimed invention are configured to be applied substantially at the same time on the at least one of the polishing areas of the plurality of polishing areas. That is, the pair of workpieces is applied substantially simultaneously on the same polishing area.

In a like manner, Tolles fails to identically disclose each and every feature of the claimed invention, as defined in independent claim 9. First, Tolles does not disclose a leaf structure having a pair of fingers. Rather, Tolles discloses a cross-like carousel. Furthermore, in the claimed invention, each finger is configured to include a workpiece and the pair of workpieces is configured to be applied onto the polishing area. In contrast, in Tolles, each of the wafers being polished is applied to a different polishing area.

Similarly, Tolles fails to identically disclose each and every feature of the claimed invention, as defined in claim 17. Among other features, Tolles fails to specifically teach a single polishing pad and applying of the pair of wafers onto the single polishing pad. In the same manner, Tolles fails to identically disclose application of the pair of carrier devices onto a polishing area. Rather, Tolles applies each wafer on a respective polishing area.

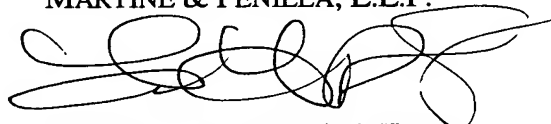
Accordingly, independent claims 1, 9, 17, and 18 are respectfully submitted to be patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over Tolles. In a like manner, dependent claims 2-6, 10-14, and 19-22 each of which directly or indirectly depends from the applicable independent claim are submitted to be patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over Tolles for at least the reasons set forth above regarding the independent claims 1, 9, and 18.

Indication of Allowability:

Applicant acknowledges the Office's comments that dependent claims 7, 8, 15, 16, and 22 would be allowable if each includes all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 7, 8, 15, 16, and 22 have been re-written in independent form, independent claims 23-27, respectively, and include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 23-27, which define other embodiments of several embodiments defined in the subject application, is in a condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims 1-27 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions concerning the present Amendment, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at (408) 749-6900, ext. 6913. If any additional fees are due in connection with filing this Amendment, the Commissioner is also authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-0805 (Order No. LAM2P232A). A duplicate copy of the transmittal is enclosed for this purpose.

Respectfully submitted,
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